CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A data packet for transmission over a random access channel within a wireless spread spectrum code division multiple access communication system, the data packet comprising:

a preamble portion and a non-preamble portion, each having an associated processing gain; wherein the preamble portion processing gain is higher than the non-preamble portion processing gain.

2. The data packet of claim 1 wherein the preamble and non-preamble error encoding gains.

3. The data packet of claim 1 wherein the preamble and non-preamble error encoding gains are a result of processing the data packet with a first and second convolutional encoder, respectively.

4. The data packet of claim 3 wherein the first convolutional encoder is a 7/8 convolutional encoder and the second convolutional encoder is a convolutional encoder in the range of a 1/3 to 1/2 convolutional encoder.

5. The data packet of claim 1 wherein the preamble processing gain is a first

spreading factor and the non-preamble processing gain is a second spreading factor.

6. The data packet of claim 1 wherein the random access channel is a common packet channel.